

TWO MINUTES OF HEART-BREAK AT LOAKES PARK

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 2, BROMLEY 1

FOR 73 MINUTES the most likely outcome of Bromley's visit to Loakes Park was one Isthmian League point from a goal-less draw. Then, in two heart-breaking minutes, everything went sour.

A tragic penalty decision put Bromley in arrears, they conceded another goal almost immediately, and although Roy Pettet pulled one back with nine minutes to go, Bromley's cup of woe overflowed when leading scorer John Rains was carried off, leaving Bromley to play out the last eight minutes with only ten men.

Rains went off on a stretcher following a tackle by Langfield, and was whisked away by ambulance for a hospital check which revealed that earlier fears of a broken leg were groundless.

The key factor, in terms of the match result, was the penalty kick which referee A. Turvey awarded Wycombe in the 73rd minute, up to which point there had been little real prospect of a goal.

Micky Miles, under pressure, shaped to play the ball out of the penalty area with his body, but the ball bounced up awkwardly, and he simply could not get his arm out of the way.

NO CHOICE

It was an involuntary action, but one which left on-the-spot Mr Turvey with absolutely no alternative. It had to be a penalty. And Horse-

man hit a perfect spot-kick to put Wycombe ahead.

Bromley were clearly sickened by the whole incident, and their dismay was understandable. When Miles made his move, there was absolutely no chance of Wycombe scoring at that point.

If you believe in bad luck, then here was a perfect example of it, and even some of the Wycombe fans, who are as partisan as any, could be heard making sympathetic noises.

It was a tragedy for Miles, who had an impressive match, and was the best tackler on the pitch.

It might be argued that Mr Turvey could have turned a blind eye to Miles' hand-ball on the grounds that it was accidental. But Mr Turvey had, on two earlier occasions, demonstrated unmistakably

that he was a letter-of-the-law man.

The first instance came when he penalised Wycombe goalkeeper Maskell for carrying the ball more than the permitted four paces — a technical offence committed by practically every goalkeeper.

And before the kick could be taken, Mr Turvey again wielded the big stick when he took the name of Wycombe's Amos for encroachment.

Nothing really unusual about that, you may think. But this was not the routine affair of a player standing too close to the ball in order to prevent the free kick from being taken.

Amos was, in fact, about five yards behind the ball, from which point he was organising Wycombe's defensive wall. But the laws clearly state that, whether north, south, east or west of the ball, he should have been at least ten yards away.

ROBUST

Another case of a technical offence, maybe, but it was good enough for Mr Turvey, so Amos had to spell his name out.

Apart from these little diversions, there was not a great deal to record about the first three-quarters of the match. It was quite a robust affair at times, but there was too much emphasis on the big boot by both sides, and the entertainment value could not be rated very highly.

Bromley appeared to be still brooding over that penalty decision when Wycombe hit them with a second goal. Keith Beerling came out to challenge for a cross but did not get it, and before he could recover, Langfield had lifted the ball over the defence and into the empty net.

This was the signal for Bromley to replace John Frewing with Micky Rooth, and for skipper Roy Pettet to move up into the attack. And Pettet got Bromley's consolation goal, forcing the ball over the line after his first shot was parried.

Bromley. — Beerling, Debnam, Brown, Pettet, J. Miles, M. Miles, Trevett, Deadman, Rains, Frewing, Tomei. Sub.: Rooth for Frewing.

JOHN HULLS